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STATE FOR HAITI EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE  
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SUBJECT: Estonian Support to Haitian Relief Efforts

¶1. One of the earliest EU members to come forward, Estonia has pledged one million EEK (approximately USD 93,000) to support Haitian relief efforts, to be distributed through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Foreign Minister Urmas Paet announced the commitment on Wednesday, January 13 while on an official visit to South Korea.

¶2. On Thursday, January 14, Gert Teder, the Chief of Estonia's Search and Rescue (SAR) unit and a member of Estonia's Disaster Relief Team (EDRT) traveled to Haiti as part of an EU team. Teder has experience from two EDRT deployments to Pakistan in 2005 and ¶2006. The EU team's assessment will help to determine what other needs may be met by additional EU resources. Estonia has a number of SAR and other technical experts on standby as part of other EU disaster relief teams. An Estonian IT Specialist is en route to Haiti to provide communication support to a UN crisis team, and a three-person logistics team will also be on their way to Haiti within the next 24-48 hours as part of a Nordic team under the International Humanitarian Partnership.

¶3. The call for private donations is also receiving wide spread publicity in the Estonian media. The Estonian Red Cross and the Estonian branch of UNICEF have begun informing the public how to make donations. The Red Cross Director made an early appeal for cash donations only, noting the difficulty and added expense of transporting donated goods. Estonians are likely to respond very positively to the calls for support since one of their own has been featured prominently as a rescued survivor. Tarmo Joeveer, a 35-year-old Estonian working with the UN, was rescued by a SAR Team from Fairfax, Virginia.

¶4. There has been no request from Estonia for USG assistance with their relief efforts to date, but Estonia's Rescue Board meets again on the evening of Friday, January 15 with their Nordic counterparts to address the logistical needs for transporting the Estonian logistics team via Sweden. Once we move beyond the emergency relief and disaster recovery phase, the GOE is interested in cooperating on long-term development projects in Haiti, such as the establishment of a national ID card system, a project for which Haitian officials visited Estonia in 2009.  
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